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ONE evening near the close of the last century a group of young men were celebrating in the room of one of their number, and in the usual student fashion, the bestowal of the doctor's degree upon their host. The affair took place in Copenhagen, and the young scholar who was the center of attraction bore the name of Hans Christian Oersted—a name then unknown, but destined some score of years later to become immortalized by one of the greatest discoveries in the history of physical science. The conversation dealt for a time with scientific matters, but presently veered about to the existing condition of poetry in Denmark. It was generally felt and admitted that Danish poetry, since the death of Ewald, had fallen into disrepute, and that the new birth of the spirit in most other European countries had done nothing to lift Danish letters out of their deep eighteenth-century rut. At this point a young man who had hitherto taken little part in the talk rose suddenly from his corner, stepped into the midst of the little circle, brought his fist down upon the table, and exclaimed: "It has fallen, it is true; but it shall—the devil take me—rise up again!" There was an earnestness in the young man's manner that checked the natural impulse to smile at such a prophecy, and his hearers felt that this was more than a common outburst of boyish enthusiasm. The young man was not quite twenty years old at the time of this episode, and practically unknown to fame; ten years later he was acclaimed the greatest poet that Denmark had ever produced, and his youthful prediction had received an ampler fulfillment than any of which those who heard it could have dreamed.

Adam Gottlob Oehlenschläger was born in Copenhagen

November 14, 1779, just a quarter of a century after the death of Holberg. His ancestry was German rather than Danish, and his descent from four generations of organists may fairly be reckoned as having had some influence in the determination of his artistic bent. At the time when he appears in the anecdote as the prophet of a rehabilitated Danish muse, he had rounded out a happy, careless youth, applied himself indifferently to his studies, read a good many books, and written verses, tales, and dramatic sketches. His interest in the drama had even impelled him to study the actor's profession, and for a year or two he had played minor parts on the stage of the Royal Theater. His efforts as a writer had been of insignificant value, and there was little that was stimulating in the literary atmosphere that surrounded his early years. Holberg had left nothing that could be called a school, and the classical tradition that he had maintained was carried on feebly enough by a few third-rate poets. This tradition received its deathblow at the hands of Wessel, the one poet contemporary with Ewald who was a real literary force, and whose satirical play, "*Kjærlighed uden Strømper*" ("Love without Stockings") killed classical tragedy in Denmark as effectively as "*Don Quixote*" killed chivalrous romance in Spain. The exquisite talent of Ewald had blossomed and passed away, its seed to all seeming having fallen on stony ground. Jens Baggesen, a graceful poet and a master of pathos and humor—a typical transition figure, striving to escape from a past which he felt to be outworn, but lacking the discernment of the pioneer—was the most conspicuous Danish writer of the closing years of the century, but it was already evident that no word of his was to be the "*Open Sesame*" of the new treasure-house of the spirit. A ferment was indeed stirring in the national consciousness, but there was no indication as yet of the means whereby the transformation was to be effected, or the form to be assumed by the resulting product.

Oehlenschläger soon tired of the play actor's calling, and resumed his interrupted studies. He entered the university as a law student, but found jurisprudence less tempting than

the opportunity, offered soon after his entrance, of competing for a prize for an essay on the subject of the desirability of substituting the Norse for the Greek mythology in Scandinavian literature. It is hardly necessary to state which side of the argument he took, and, although his essay failed to get the prize, it shows us to what extent the ideals that were to control his future creative activity were already shaping themselves in his mind. Meanwhile the events were already hastening that were to give his genius the needed impulse, and help him to the discovery of his true self. After eighty years of peace, Denmark got a taste of warfare in the first year of the present century. The French revolutionary movement and the Napoleonic wars suddenly drew Denmark within their vortex, and a wave of passionate patriotism swept over the country when an English fleet under Nelson attacked the Danes in the harbor of Copenhagen. This event and its attendant surge of national feeling stimulated the young law student to renewed poetical exertions, and, although his work was still amateurish and tentative, it struck a new note and gave evidence of a new energy. But the influence that was to operate most powerfully in shaping his poetical destiny was intellectual rather than political. It was the great revolution in taste and sentiment that had been creating a new literature in Germany, and that is called, somewhat vaguely, the Romantic Movement.

Oehlenschläger's mental condition at this time is suggestive of a bud ready to burst open with the first hour of sunlight, almost of a train of gunpowder that needs but a spark for the liberation of its imprisoned force. The sunlight hour, or the spark (to leave the reader his choice of metaphors), was provided by a young Norwegian, Henrik Steffens by name, who came to Copenhagen in the summer of 1802, after having spent four years in Germany. Steffens had been a pupil of Schelling in Jena, and had come into close contact with Fichte, A. W. Schlegel, Schiller, Wieland, Herder, and Goethe—that is, with the leaders of the new philosophy and the new literature. His own achieve-

ments were already considerable, and his relations with the Jena-Weimar circle are indicated by an anecdote from his biography. There was a court masquerade at Weimar on the 31st of December, 1800. After midnight Goethe, Schiller, Schelling, and Steffens withdrew from the ball to a side room, and drank champagne to welcome the coming of the new century. Goethe was jovial, Schiller indulged in instructive discourse, Schelling remained quiet, and Steffens, in happy contentment, took pleasure in noting the various effects of the wine upon those great souls. This was the man whose stay in Copenhagen was destined to give a new impulse to Danish thought. During the following year Steffens gave courses of lectures, in which philosophy, literature, and art were discussed in so fresh and suggestive a way as to offer nothing less than a revelation to his hearers. The best parallel to the influence of these lectures is to be found in the strikingly similar work done by Coleridge for the English public at almost exactly the same time. Oehlenschläger was introduced to Steffens soon after the latter came to Copenhagen, and gives the following account of the first occasion when he had an opportunity to hear the newcomer speak: "He spoke at some length and gave utterance to many new opinions; the eloquence and boldness of his discourse made the hair stand upon our heads, and we were no less astounded than the parish clerk and the bailiff in 'Erasmus Montanus,' when Erasmus seeks to prove that the earth is round and the parish clerk a cock. I played in a manner the parts of both bailiff and parish clerk, and found it in my conscience that Steffens was wrong, but could not cope with him in argument. My philosophical knowledge was too slight to permit me to venture upon slippery ice against this bold warrior. But I did what I could, and was the only one of those present who dared oppose him."

A few days latter Oehlenschläger called upon Steffens at eleven o'clock in the morning, and the conversation that began between them was kept up for sixteen hours without a break. At three the next morning Steffens offered his guest a bed, and the young poet snatched a few hours of

restless sleep. Returning to his lodgings, he took pen and ink, and straightway composed a poem, "*Guldhornene*" ("*The Golden Horns.*") "With this poem, remarkable in so many aspects," says Hansen, "the romantic period of Danish literature begins." The horns in question were two relics of antiquity that had been unearthed sometime before, and placed on exhibition in the museum at Copenhagen. Their history becomes "a symbol for the newly awakened poet:" the golden horns, with their strange carvings and mysterious runic inscriptions, are gifts of the gods bestowed upon men to remind them of their divine origin, of the ties, half forgotten, that bind them to the distant past." This poem foreshadows at once the general romantic movement that was to be felt in the Danish literature of the early nineteenth century, and the specially national stamp that the movement was to receive. Once started upon his newly found path, Oehlenschläger went forward with all the impetuosity of youth. Abandoning the works upon which he had been engaged, and which were about ready for the press, the new impulse took possession of him so completely that by Christmas of the memorable year in which he had met Steffens a fresh volume of poems was ready for publication. These "*Digte*," bearing the date 1803, included lyrics, ballads, and a dramatic piece called "*Sanct Hansaften-Spil*" ("*St. John's Eve Play*"), and were nothing less than a revelation of the hitherto unknown possibilities of Danish song. Nothing like them had ever before been written in the language, and nothing save the lyrical impulse of Ewald had even indicated the possibility of such a poet as had now arisen. A later critic, P. L. Möller, thus characterizes the little volume, which stands as "the corner stone of nineteenth-century Danish poetry:" "No other Danish book has so wonderful a fragrance of culture-history, breathes forth such a wealth of glowing memories, of fiery ardor, and the joy of life, and impossible hopes for the future. We read a few lines in it, and seem to feel the breezes of a land from which care and terror and the sorrow and pettiness of earth are all ban-

ished. In this little book we may, at whatever moment we will, find ourselves transported as if by magic into an ideal world, into the rapture of an everlasting spring; we feel such buoyancy, courage, and strength that it seems as if we might soar above creation, and with a breath move mountains and turn aside all obstacles. And everywhere there is blossoming and a fragrance as of thousands of spring flowers, a singing and a charming as of song-bird choirs, the woods murmur, and the brooks ripple with sparkle of gold and diamonds."

The years immediately following are the richest of Oehlenschläger's life. In 1805 he made his first journey abroad, visiting in Halle his friend Steffens, who had gone back to Germany after a stay of about two years in Copenhagen. But before undertaking this journey the poet had produced a number of works that deserve a fuller description than it is possible to give them here. Only the merest mention can be given to the "Förste Sang af Edda" ("First Song of the Edda"), which marks the beginning of his lifelong endeavor to bestow a new life upon the "Gods of the North;" to the "Vaulundurs Saga," a prose work which mingles legend with the "natural philosophy" of romanticism in a characteristic fashion; to the cycle of poems called "Langelands-Rejsen" ("A Journey to Langeland"), a collection of lyrical *impressions de voyage*; and to the awkwardly named "Jesu Christi Gientagne Liv i den Aarlige Natur" ("The Life of Christ Annually Repeated in Nature"), a series of poems inspired by Novalis and Schelling, and finding the life of Christ symbolical of a pantheistic conception of nature. More important than any of these is the dramatic fairy tale of "Aladdin," wherein the rich, free fantasy of the poet's youthful imagination found its most complete and adequate expression. This poem, based upon the familiar Eastern tale, became deeply significant for Danish culture. It is the gospel of genius, the glorification of the magic power that commands the deepest secrets of existence, the song of the joy of life and the new birth of the spirit after an age of prosaic and uninspired "enlighten-

ment." It is not a world poem of the order of "Faust," yet it is the work which stands in Danish poetry as in some sense the analogue of that masterpiece.

The works above mentioned, together with a few others of less importance—all the product of a little over two years of activity—were collected into two volumes of "Poetiske Skrifter" ("Poetical Writings"), published in 1805, just before the author left Denmark for Germany. The effect of this publication is best described in the words of Grundtvig, perhaps the most remarkable of Oehlenschläger's contemporaries. "Oehlenschläger's 'Poetiske Skrifter,'" he says, "found in me an ear that was attuned to Northern tones, and an eye that had just been opened to the splendor of Christianity and all the great aspects of life, together with a heart whose deeper yearnings had been suddenly awakened as by a thunderclap. It was wonderful to me that the tones so long silent, and the yearnings whispered in the depths of the heart, should speak with such living accent in the Danish tongue. Many sleeping memories awoke within me. In my solitude I had listened to the harps of Shakspeare, Goethe, Schiller, and Ossian; I had brooded with Fichte, Schiller, and Schelling upon the meaning of life, upon the fleeting and the permanent. What Steffens had not formerly brought me to believe, but compelled me to remember, lived once more in my soul, and a transformation took place in my ideas and whole mode of thought, of which I first became fully aware when I took up the pen I had for a time laid aside, and sought, after my custom, to account to myself for my thoughts and beliefs concerning the things that seemed great and significant in my sight." The acute and elegant critic, J. L. Heiberg—at this time a boy of thirteen—thus records the impression made upon him by the poems: "Those works took such possession of me that my poetical consciousness, so to speak, first awoke at the moment when I learned to know them. It seemed to me that I had never before known what poetry was, and had now first learned it." And still another writer, the poet Hauch, bears tribute in similar terms: "Nearly everything I had previously read of

poetry seemed to give me only momentary glimpses of the temple of the gods, as in the distance it now and then revealed itself to my vision; but Oehlenschläger, next to Shakspeare, was the one who threw the temple wide open for me, so that the fullness of its divine splendor streamed upon me."

Oehlenschläger's foreign journey, begun in 1805, extended over four years. He went first to Halle, where Steffens was for a time established, and spent about six months in close intimacy with his friend and with Schleiermacher. Berlin, Weimar, Jena, Leipzig, and Dresden came next in his itinerary. In Berlin he made the acquaintance of Fichte, and in Weimar read his "Aladdin" in a German translation to Goethe. A long stay in Paris followed, then a winter in Coppet, as the guest of Madame de Staël, and finally a spring and summer in Rome, where he contracted a warm friendship for his famous fellow-countryman Thorvaldsen. Six important poetical works were the product of these four years of rich experience and broadening ideals. "Hakon Jarl" ("Earl Hakon") "Baldur hin Gode" ("Balder the Good") and "Thors Rejse til Jothunhjem" ("Thor's Journey to Jotunheim") were written in Germany, "Palnatoke" and "Axel og Valborg" in Paris, and "Correggio" in Rome. As these are the greatest of Oehlenschläger's works, they call for more than a mere designation. When the poet, removed from his native land, felt the creative impulse grow strong within him, it was inevitable that he should turn for his subjects to the history and the legends of the North. Mr. Gosse exaggerates greatly when he tells us how Oehlenschläger one day found in the library at Halle a copy of the "Heimskringla," and adds that "the event was as full of import to Scandinavian literature as Luther's famous discovery of the Bible was to German liberty." The simple truth is that it had long been a leading article of Oehlenschläger's creed that the most important work to be done for Danish poetry was that of giving a new life to the literature of Edda and Saga, and that he was himself the man best fitted for the task. His reading of the

“Hakon Jarl’s Saga” in Halle was the spark that kindled a train long laid in his consciousness, and has no import beyond this.

The work that resulted was “Hakon Jarl,” a tragedy in five acts and in blank iambic verse, a masterpiece in a very high sense of the term. The period of this tragedy is the most interesting in Scandinavian history, one of the most interesting in all the history of culture, the period of the introduction of Christianity into Norway. Of the conflict between pagan and Christian among the Goths and Celts in Gaul, Germany, and the British Isles, only meagre accounts are left us, but the later conquests of Christianity in the North are chronicled in a rich and detailed literature, and the struggle between the opposing faiths, as told by the sagamen, makes one of the most vivid and enthralling chapters of history. “The day was come,” as the ‘*Heimskringla*’ tells us, “when foredoomed was blood-offering and the men of blood-offerings, and the holy faith came in their stead, and the true worship.” The day was near the close of the tenth century, when Olaf Trygvesön fared from Dublin to Norway, and overthrew Earl Hakon, although the final establishment of the Christian faith in Norway was left for Olaf the Holy to accomplish in the century following. Oehlenschläger’s treatment of this splendid theme is well-balanced and impressive. He makes us feel the tremendous significance of the struggle, and views the issue with the impartial eye of the artist. His sympathies incline, as they are bound to do, toward the victorious faith, but he does full justice to the strength, and even to the virtues, of the heathen ideal. In “*Palnatoke*,” indeed, which soon followed “Hakon Jarl,” he was accused, although hardly with justice, with having so contrasted the nobler aspects of the heathen character with the darker side of the new religion as to prejudice the latter in the comparison. If he becomes here in some slight sense a partisan, he appears not so much in the character of spokesman for the old-time heathen ideal as in that of antagonist of the Catholic Church, which was perhaps inevitable for one of his Protestant environment and nurture.

"Palnatoke" was written in Paris, where the poet had come into close contact with August and Friedrich Schlegel, and been repelled by the catholicizing tendencies of the latter. When he speaks of the "monk pest from the south," he voices the protest of his large-souled hero-chief, incapable of any warfare that is not straightforward and honorable, against the deceit, the cunning, and the counterfeit miracles whereby the Church, the first fierce shock of arms being over, sought to confirm its power over a simple-minded and essentially noble-hearted people. The scene of "Palnatoke" is in Denmark, and also in the latter tenth century, soon after the forced introduction of Christianity under Harald Blaatand (Blue Tooth). The tragedy is a worthy counterpart to "Hakon Jarl," and is distinguished by a similar strength, directness, and fine dramatic workmanship.

It is a curious fact that the interest of "Palnatoke" is created and sustained without the introduction of a single female character, and with hardly an allusion to the part played by woman in human life. "Axel og Valborg" atones for this deficiency, if such it be, in the fullest measure, for it is a love tragedy in a sense almost as exclusive as "Romeo and Juliet," and is steeped from beginning to end in the purest romantic sentiment. It is difficult to speak in measured terms of this beautiful work; the other tragedies of Oehlenschläger compel admiration in various degrees and forms, but this commands affection rather than admiration, and has a place all by itself in the heart. The story is taken from one of the most familiar of Danish ballads. Axel and Valborg are cousins who love one another, but the canon law forbids them to marry as too close of kin. Axel makes a pilgrimage to Rome, and returns to Norway with a papal dispensation removing the impediment. Meanwhile the king, Hakon Herdebred, has become enamored of the maiden, and finds his designs upon her rudely shattered by the sanction given to her marriage with her cousin. At this juncture a scheming monk comes to his aid, and points out a defect in the dispensation. As cousins the lovers are now

indeed free to marry, but the fact that they were christened together makes them brother and sister by baptism, and the papal sanction does not remove this bar. In his despair Axel plans to take secret flight with his beloved, when news of an attack upon the kingdom arouses his patriotism, and he feels bound to stand by his king in the hour of danger. He saves the king from death, but at the cost of his own life. Valborg comes to him just as he has breathed his last, and dies heartbroken upon his body. The entire action of this tragedy takes place in the great cathedral of Thronhjelm, and the date is the middle of the eleventh century. This sweet and tender story is dramatized with such simplicity, pathos, and depth of poetic feeling that the impression produced upon spectator or reader is simply overwhelming. The tragedy occupies the highest place in Danish literature, and is equaled by but few in any other modern literature.

The tragedy of "*Baldur hin Gode*" was written under the influence of Sophocles, as expounded by Schleiermacher to the enthusiastic young poet during his winter in Halle. It is unlike the works just discussed in being written, except for the lyrical interludes, in the older poetic form of iambic hexameter. It is an attempt, and a fairly successful one, to treat the fascinating myth of Balder's death in the manner of Greek tragedy. "*Thors Reyse til Jothumheim*" is an epic in five songs, and up to the time of its composition the most ambitious of Oehlenschläger's already numerous attempts to utilize the legendary as distinguished from the historical traditions of his race, for the purpose of nondramatic poetry. It is also interesting as furnishing a prologue to "*Gods of the North*," the poet's greatest work in this kind, produced many years later. "*Correggio*," the chief result of his Italian sojourn, was first written in German, of which language Oehlenschläger thought himself a master, which he distinctly was not. On his way home he tried to read the play to Goethe, but the latter, who had always treated Oehlenschläger with kindness, but had come to regard him as something of a bore, contrived to evade the reading. The character of the

painter in this play is conceived rather passively than actively, and the balance inclines too far on the side of pure emotion to make the work as effective as it might have been, but it has many striking and characteristic beauties, and ranks high among the author's productions.

Oehlenschläger had left Denmark in the flush of youthful success, and his four years abroad had more than fulfilled the promise of his early career. His works, as sent home from time to time, partly printed in Copenhagen and partly circulated in manuscript among his friends, had so greatly enhanced his reputation that when he returned, in 1809, he was acclaimed, with but few dissenting voices, as the greatest of Danish poets, and all sorts of honors were heaped upon him. In the year following he married, and was appointed Professor of *Æsthetics* in the University. "Comedies and novels end with the wedding of the hero," he says in his autobiography, "for only the struggle, not the acquired position, lends itself to their treatment." Although an account of Oehlenschläger's career may hardly end with his marriage and settlement in life, it must be said that the remaining forty years of his existence, although they added many volumes to the series of his writings, brought but little increase to his fame. In a certain sense, indeed, they diminished that fame, for, when the first outburst of enthusiasm had died away, the voice of the detractor began to be heard, and for many years the poet was compelled to defend himself in a critical warfare that enlisted among his opponents some of the strongest and acutest minds among his contemporaries. Any detailed account of these controversies would be out of place here, but a few words must be given to the exposition of their general trend. The strongest of his opponents was Grundtvig, who had likewise felt the extraordinary influence of Steffens in earlier days, but whose genius took a more strenuous bent than was possible to the imaginative and genial nature of Oehlenschläger. Grundtvig's criticism was based upon a twofold opposition. In the first place, he claimed that the author of "*Hakon Jarl*" and "*Baldur hin Gode*" was lacking in the historical

sense, that he had failed to penetrate into the spirit of the old Norse life, and that his envisagement of Norse antiquity was so colored by modern sentiment, so adorned with a false rhetoric and a false pathos as to be essentially untrustworthy. In the second place, Grundtvig was inspired by a stern religious impulse to condemn what seemed to him the misleading tendencies of Oehlenschläger's conception of the relations of God to nature and to man. "It grieves me to the heart," he said, "to note the growing lack of religious seriousness in your poems, and that in your latest poems this element gives place to a sort of play with spiritual matters. . . . It pains me most of all because such a change must find its basis in the poet's innermost nature, must follow from his ceasing to reflect seriously upon his own spiritual relation to God as his servant on earth; from his attaching more weight to outward show, to the winning of applause and honor, than to the helping of his brothers to worship God in spirit and in truth." The latter of these charges, although perfectly sincere, has a dogmatic narrowness so obvious that no defense of the poet is really needed. The charge of imperfect historical insight is to a certain extent justified, but lies with equal force against almost every artistic effort to reconstruct the life of a bygone age. Oehlenschläger brought the same charge against Ewald, Grundtvig brought it against Oehlenschläger, and later writers have brought it against Grundtvig. In our own day the saga dramas of Björnson and Ibsen have portrayed the conditions of the Viking age with what seems to modern criticism a degree of vital truth that goes far beyond the best achievements of Oehlenschläger and Grundtvig, but these later works are by no means guiltless of putting nineteenth-century sentiment into the mouths of hero and heroine of the saga time. The critical warfare waged against Oehlenschläger by Jens Baggesen need not detain us long, for it is chiefly concerned with minute questions of philology and æsthetics, and had its mainspring in the jealousy of a rival who found himself overshadowed by a younger man. Baggesen was doubtless right upon many points, but the person-

al element in his attack greatly lessened the effectiveness of his criticism. It was reserved for Heiberg, a later and calmer writer, to review Oehlenschläger's work in the spirit of an enlightened and impersonal æsthetic criticism, and to pass upon it the judgment that has been substantially accepted by posterity.

For twenty years after his return to Denmark, in 1809, Oehlenschläger kept hard at work, lecturing at the university, defending himself against his critics, and producing a great amount of original work of various sorts, from the occasional set of verses to the tragedy and the epic cycle. One year of this period (1816-17) was spent abroad, in what the poet called "a voluntary ostracism," the journey being undertaken in a moment of petulance resulting from Baggesen's persistent critical onslaughts. The list of works produced during this score of years is so lengthy, and the greater number of them so unmistakably inferior to their predecessors, that only a few need be named at all. "Nordens Guder" ("Gods of the North), the great epic cycle of the Scandinavian Pantheon, is the consummation of Oehlenschläger's efforts to utilize the Norse mythology for the purposes of modern poetry. Allied with this phase of his genius are the three poems: "Helge," "Yrsa," and "Hroars Saga," which form a sort of trilogy. The dramatic idyl of "Den Lille Hyrdedreng" ("The Little Shepherd Boy") was so beautiful as almost to silence for a time the critics of the poet. "Hrolf Krake," another considerable poem, deals with the epic material previously handled by Ewald in his pioneer attempt to delve in the legendary past. "Oeen i Sydhavet" ("The Isle in the Southern Sea") is a prose romance of great length, the only important work of this sort attempted by Oehlenschläger, and of no great value as a whole, although including some attractive episodes. The principal tragedies of these twenty years are: "Stærkodder," "Hagbarth og Signe," "Erik og Abel," "Væringerne i Miklagard" ("The Varangians in Micklegarth"), "Karl den Store" ("Karl the Great"), and "Langbardene" ("The Lombards").

In the summer of 1829 the poet, just completing his fiftieth year, made a holiday trip to Sweden, and was received with great enthusiasm. Invited to participate in the annual celebration of the University of Lund, he accepted, and marched to the cathedral with the academic procession. Tegnér, who had a few years previously resigned his post at the University to become Bishop of Wexiö, and whose rank as the greatest of Swedish poets was now unquestioned, took the leading part in the celebration, and bestowed the customary laurels upon the students who had won their degrees. When this part of the ceremony was over, the speaker turned toward Oehlenschläger, and, continuing the versified address which had accompanied the awarding of academic honors, offered a laurel wreath to "the Adam of skalds, the king of Northern singers." In simple and touching hexameters, full of the deepest feeling, Tegnér spoke of the dissensions of the past, and of the new spiritual union of the two nations that the honored poet-guest had more than any other helped to cement. "Therefore," he said, "in the name of song and of the eternal, Svea offers you a crown, and I utter these words. Accept it from a fraternal hand, and bear it in memory of this day." Thereupon, amid sound of cannon and trumpets, the speaker crowned his brother poet and embraced him before the assembled multitude. When the enthusiasm occasioned by this scene had been given time to subside, Oehlenschläger, who had by no means come unprepared, made his reply, likewise in verse, emphasizing the essential unity of the Scandinavian nations, and making graceful acknowledgment of the honor that had been bestowed upon him. A festival banquet followed, with the usual toasts and cheers, while at the end the two poets were raised upon the shoulders of the students and paraded in triumph. Oehlenschläger returned to Copenhagen immediately, and a few days later had the pleasure of receiving Tegnér, with three hundred of his fellow-countrymen, upon Danish soil, and echoing the festivities of Lund. Later in the same year—the fairest in his whole life—the Danish poet received the Swe-

dish decoration of the North Star and the doctor's degree from Lund University, besides being made the recipient of a striking demonstration from the students of his own university on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday.

The remaining twenty years of Oehlenschläger's life (for he rounded out the full scriptural tale) were no less active than the twenty just preceding. They were marked by the same uninterrupted succession of new productions, few of which, however, were worthy of his genius, although the old fire and deep poetic feeling flashed out now and then, to the surprise of both critics and friends. Among the tragedies of this closing period the following may be named: "Tordenskjold," "Dronning Margareta" ("Queen Margaret") "Sokrates" (the poet's only employment of a Greek theme), "Olaf den Hellige" ("Olaf the Holy"), "Knud den Store" ("Canute the Great"), "Dina," and "Amleth." The latter of these tragedies is particularly interesting as an attempt to reconstruct the historical Hamlet of Saxo's chronicle in contrast with Shakespeare's purely imaginative creation of the Danish Prince. It seemed to Oehlenschläger that the Hamlet who belonged to the national history of Denmark deserved treatment at the hands of a Danish poet, and that it would be an act of patriotism to restore the figure to Danish literature. Other works of this period were: "Norgesrejsen" ("The Journey to Norway"), "Digtekunsten" ("The Art of Poetry"), "Oervarodds Saga," and "Landet Fundet og Forsvundet" ("The Found and Vanished Land"). The last-named work deals, in dramatic form, with the Norse discovery of Vinland. The poet's last production was a hero-poem upon the subject of "Regnar Lodbrok," and ends with the pathetic words: "The old Skald sang for the last time of the old Norse heroes." The poet's "Erindringer" ("Recollections"), upon which he had been engaged for several years, remained to be published after his death. The series of works thus completed fills, in the standard edition, no less than forty volumes, of which four contain the "Erindringer," ten the tragedies, and twenty-six the mis-

cellaneous productions in verse and prose. They stand as a lasting monument to the genius of the greatest poet of Denmark, as the living memorial of their author's singularly rich, fruitful, and fortunate career.

Outwardly this score of years that crowned Oehlenschläger's life was comparatively uneventful. A journey to Norway in 1833 (commemorated in "Norgesrejsen") and a second visit to Sweden in 1847, where he received ovations at Stockholm and Upsala, were the most noteworthy episodes of this period. Meanwhile, in face of the poet's broadening fame and strengthened hold upon the minds and hearts of his fellow-countrymen, the wave of adverse criticism that had at one time risen so high was steadily subsiding, and even his most determined opponents came to recognize the indebtedness of the nation to the man who, whatever his lapses from a high ideal and however weak he had shown himself in his comparative failures, had nevertheless created a new literature for Denmark, and awakened the creative spirit that was now displaying itself on every hand. It was during these last years of Oehlenschläger's life—that is, during the thirties and forties—that most of the men arose who have shaped nineteenth-century Danish literature. Besides the continued activities of the older men—Grundtvig, Heiberg, and J. C. Hauch—these years record the appearance and early successes of the novelists Ingemann, Blicher, Goldschmidt, and St. Aubain; of Henrik Hertz, master of the lyric and romantic drama; of the poets Paludan-Müller, Winther, and Ploug; of Kierkegaard, in spirit and influence akin to our own Emerson; and of Hans Christian Andersen, dear to the childhood of all lands. Widely divergent as were the paths of these men, Oehlenschläger felt, and justly, that they were in some sense his successors, and that he had given the impulse which was resulting in so marked an expansion of the national literature. Nearly all of these men, old and young, joined to do him honor in the celebration of his seventieth birthday, which was carried out with great pomp and display of enthusiasm, and even evoked tributes of heartfelt admiration from Heiberg and Grundtvig, the

poet's most inveterate critics. A few weeks later he lay upon his deathbed. At his request his son read to him the scene from his own "Sokrates," in which the philosopher discoursed upon death. He also expressed the wish that this tragedy should be presented at the theatre as a memorial performance after his death. A few hours later, toward midnight, January 20, 1850, he passed quietly away, retaining full consciousness almost to the last moment. He was buried in the Frederiksborg churchyard, where a massive block of stone marks his grave. Hans Christian Andersen tells us that when, a short time after the entombment, fresh wreaths were brought to replace the old ones upon the grave it was found that a song bird had made its nest in the withered leaves. It is a pretty story, and serves well to end our account of the great national poet of Denmark.

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